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Quiz David Benatar: Why It Is Better Never to Come into Existence

○ one correct answer · ▢ one or more correct answers

1. What is the main thesis that Benatar is arguing for in his paper?

- ○ a. Procreation is morally wrong (or at least undesirable)
- ○ b. Most parents have strong interests not to procreate
- ○ c. It should be legally forbidden to procreate
- ○ d. From a moral point of view there can be no meaningful discussions about procreation
- ○ e. Debates about procreation elicit strong feelings

2. Benatar's main argument for anti-natalism – the so called „asymmetry argument" – makes the following claim about the moral relevance of harms and benefits:

- ○ a. While the presence of pain is not bad, the presence of pleasure is good
- ○ b. While the absence of pain is not good, the absence of pleasure is bad
- ○ c. While the absence of pain is good, the absence of pleasure is not bad
- ○ d. While the presence of pain is bad, the presence of pleasure is not good

3. Among others, Benatar defends the above asymmetry by pointing out that it provides the best explanation of the following widely held views:

- ▢ a. We have a duty not to bring suffering persons into existence
- ▢ b. We have a duty to bring happy persons into existence
- ▢ c. We do not have a duty not to bring suffering persons into existence
- ▢ d. We do not have a duty to bring happy persons into existence

4. Benatar also proposes two other arguments for the asymmetry between pleasure and pain, according to which this asymmetry best explains (1) ordinary views about the reasons that people have for procreating/not procreating and (2) people's tendencies to feel/not feel regret for procreating/not procreating.

- ○ True
- ○ False

5. What does Benatar say about the magnitude of the wrongness/undesirability of bringing a person into existence?

- ☐ a. The exact magnitude of the wrongness/undesirability of procreation varies depending on the harm that is involved in a person's existence
- ☐ b. The exact magnitude of the wrongness/undesirability of procreation is always the same, i.e., does not vary
- ☐ c. It is always at least somewhat wrong/undesirable to procreate because every life involves at least some harm (e.g., death)

6. If the good things in a prospective person's life outweigh the bad things then Benatar's asymmetry argument fails, i.e., it cannot show that bringing this person into existence is wrong or undesirable.

- ○ True
- ○ False

7. Why is the presence of pleasures in prospective people's life no reason to bring these people into existence?

- ○ a. Because the absence of these pleasures is not bad for them
- ○ b. Because pleasure as such is not good
- ○ c. Because pleasure as such is neither good nor bad
- ○ d. Because the absence of these pleasures is good for them

8. According to Benatar, people's perceptions of the harms involved in life are…

- ○ a. underestimating these harm
- ○ b. exaggerating these harms
- ○ c. by and large reliable

9. Many people have strong interests to procreate because doing so allows them to pass on their genes, values, ideas, etc., and hence acquire some sort of immortality. According to Benatar, these parental interests…

- ○ a. do not need to be considered at all
- ○ b. need to be considered and indeed weigh heavier than the interest of the prospective child to not be brought into existence
- ○ c. need to be considered but weigh less than the interest of the prospective child to not be brought into existence

10. The corona virus significantly increases the amount of suffering in the world, at least for some time (and maybe even for longer). Consider Benatar's argument for not bringing new persons into existence. In your understanding, which implications (if any) does the corona crisis have with regard to these arguments?